

Remarks

Claims 20-22 have been cancelled and claim 23 has been amended to correct a typo. Claims 23-38 remain pending and have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Nedic.

Examiner admits on Page 3 of the Office Action that Nedic does not disclose that the flange be of a tapered shape at least on its non-mold engaging face. Examiner then alleges that the flange shape and arrangement of Nedic operate in substantially the same manner with substantially the same result of as Applicants' invention. Applicants respectfully disagree with this assertion.

Figure 1 of the present application depicts a prior art fill tube and attachment ring, having a flange shape similar to that disclosed in Nedic. The abrupt variation in cross-section at the formation of the flange with relatively sharp transition corners 14 and 16 (Fig. 1 of the present application) creates an undesirable stress-riser in the fill tube. Such areas of stress concentration are particularly susceptible to failure. A tapered flange does not have the areas of stress concentration found in the flange shape disclosed in Nedic and shown in Fig. 1 of the present application and hence, is not as susceptible to failure. Hence, the flange shape of Nedic does not operate in the same manner with substantially the same result as the flange shape as claimed by Applicants.

Accordingly, independent claims 23 and 33 and their dependent claims 24-32 and 34-38, respectively, are patentable over Nedic and allowance of these claims is respectfully requested.

Should matters remain which the Examiner believes could be resolved in a telephone interview, the Examiner is requested to telephone the Applicant's undersigned attorney. Alternatively, since it is believed that the claims of the present application are in condition for allowance, the Examiner is respectfully requested to issue a Notice of Allowance at the Examiner's earliest convenience.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any required fee in connection with the submission of this paper to Account No. 01-1000.

Respectfully submitted,



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